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COUNTRY East Germany

SUBJECT Meeting of Bezirk Council Chairmen in
East Berlin

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25X1

1. On 26 October 1953 a meeting of Bezirk Council chairmen convened in East Berlin. The meeting had been called by Werner Eggerath's Office of Control and Coordination for Governmental Organization. Minister-President Otto Grotewohl addressed the assembly in place of Eggerath, who, Grotewohl explained, was unable to attend because he was ill and was undergoing a cure.
2. The main items on the agenda included:
 - a. Questions of personnel policy in the East German governmental organs.
 - b. Fulfillment of national reconstruction plans in the Kreise.
 - c. Adherence to the principles of democratic law in the implementation of the New Course.
 - d. Questions of procurement and supply.
3. Funk (fnu) ^{1/} spoke on personnel questions in the East German governmental organization. Funk stated that in spite of the New Course the personnel policies of the government were still based upon the Decree of the Council of Ministers of 28 August 1952, which states:
 - a. In every governmental body (Organ) the director is responsible for personnel matters.
 - b. The composition of the governmental service must correspond to that of the progressive population, whereby the working class must have the leading role.
 - c. Women and young people must receive special training fitting them to assume leading functions.
 - d. In the selection of personnel great vigilance must be observed to protect the security of the governmental organs.

CLASSIFICATION **SECRET**

25X1

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SECRET

25X1

Page 2

e. Academically trained personnel must be increasingly drawn into the state apparatus, and all educational means must be utilized to raise the professional and political level of all employees.

f. The nomenclature principle is to be enforced.

g. Broad use must be made of criticism and self-criticism.

4. Funk stated that most functionaries accept this governmental decree but that many fail to abide by it. As an example for the failure to carry out this decree, Funk mentioned that in April 1953 the Council of Ministers decreed that the Departments for Purchase and Procurement in the Bezirk Councils were to be staffed with qualified personnel. A subsequent check by the Coordination Office and by the State Secretariat for Internal Affairs showed that this decree still had not been carried out.
5. Funk complained further that the Kreis and Bezirk chairmen still did not regard personnel matters as their primary concern and passed these matters on to the personnel sections. Some chairman asked why the cadre sections should exist if they (the chairmen) were to be responsible for personnel matters.
6. As a result of the failure of the responsible authorities to take personnel matters seriously, there were grave errors in past personnel handling. Incomplete personnel questionnaires for new employees in governmental organs were being accepted, and no attempts were made to fill in the missing points. Often there was no attempt to check into the veracity of statements made on such questionnaires.
7. Funk placed the blame for this unsatisfactory state of affairs upon the Bezirk chairmen, some of whom still were of the opinion that control in personnel matters should come either from the Bezirk Cadre Section, from the Main Department for Cadre of the State Secretariat for Internal Affairs, or from the Coordination Office. Funk stated that this was not the case, that the individual Bezirk chairmen themselves were directly responsible for personnel matters.
8. Regarding the social composition of state employees, Funk complained that there still were insufficient new employees being recruited from the ranks of workers and farmers. The same complaint was raised in regard to women and young people. Funk stated that of 376 leading functionaries in the Bezirk Councils, including department heads, only 24 were women.
9. Funk also complained that not sufficient attention was being paid by the Bezirk Council chairmen to the selection of candidates for training in administrative matters. As an example of the lack of care in this regard, he cited a recent course for mayors for which 1,757 applications were received and for which only 1,400 candidates appeared.
10. Another example is the selection of participants in the current one-year course for the training of particularly leading functionaries. In spite of the extension of the deadline by which applications were to be submitted by four weeks, only 296 of 400 places were filled.
11. Grotewohl agreed with Funk that there were serious shortcomings in the personnel work of the chairmen of the Bezirk Councils; however, he stated that all the blame did not lie with them. The personnel policies have been so bad primarily because the guidance given by the Ministry of the Interior and particularly Eggerath's Coordinating Office had been so faulty. He declared that if personnel work within the governmental organs is to be improved, the change must come at the top levels of the administration, i.e. in the Office of Control and Coordination for Governmental Organization.

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

Page 3

Grotewohl stated further that the work of the Eggerath Coordination Office suffered from the following:

- a. A lack of clarity concerning the basic questions of training qualified personnel.
- b. A lack of planning and coordination of training courses for potential governmental employees.
- c. The lack of a systematic plan for developmental training of governmental officials.

12. Grotewohl complained that he had experienced this chaotic personnel situation in his own work. For years he has been attempting to set up an office staffed by highly qualified personnel which could keep him informed and assist him in carrying out various of his duties. Two years ago he requested candidates to fill the positions in this office but until the present day he had received not one recommendation, either from the Bezirke or from the Kreise.
13. Grotewohl also criticized the publication Demokratischer Aufbau, which is full of errors and which fails to give systematic guidance and direction to personnel work.
14. The social make-up of the employees of the governmental organs was also criticized by Grotewohl. He stated that there were too few workers and farmers in these positions. In the third quarter of 1953, for example, the percentage of members of the working class in government positions decreased from 33.5 to 32.9. He demanded that this downward trend be stopped and that the social background of every new person to be hired by the government be ascertained prior to employment.
15. Many SED members had the mistaken idea that it was a matter of fact that from department head on up only SED members were to be employed. Grotewohl stated that this was wrong, that the Bloc Policy in East Germany did not consist of merely occasional declarations to the bourgeois parties, but that these parties must also be given part of the responsibility of government. As an example of this false policy, Grotewohl chided Hans Jendretzky, Chairman of the Bezirk Council of Neubrandenburg, because this Bezirk had 96 percent SED members in its administration and, although the Bezirk was 90 percent agricultural, there was not a single member of the Deutsche Bauernpartei in the administration.
16. The question of women and young people in government was also being overlooked, Grotewohl complained. He stated that the future depended upon these two groups and that plans must be laid, not only for the present but also for two, five, or ten years from today. He stated that the percentage of women in functions in Stadtkreise had decreased from 11.5 to 9.5 and in the Landkreise from 8 to 7. A similar situation exists among young people. In the Bezirk Councils, for example, within the last year the percentage of young people in leading functions decreased from 9.3 to 6.7, and in the Kreise the percentage of young people occupying important functions has shrunk from 6.2 to 5.2.

SECRET

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SECRET

Page 4

17. Grotewohl demanded that more care be devoted to the problems of personnel because with the development of conditions in West Germany people working in the governmental organs must understand clearly for what they are working and for what they may some day have to fight. The members of the police and of the KVP must know their tasks and responsibilities thoroughly and must be inspired by them so that they really know what they are defending and why they are doing it.
18. Rudolf Jahn, Bezirk Council Chairman for Dresden, spoke about the difficulty of interesting young people in government jobs where they were called bureaucrats and paper shufflers, whereas in the factories they are activists and enjoy the respect of their colleagues. Jahn suggested that a campaign to make government work more attractive to young people be started in the press and by the Zentralrat of the FDJ.
19. Jahn was also disturbed because of the fluctuation of employment in the professional groups of the government. He complained that it is very difficult to hold an engineer, a doctor, an agronomist, or a scientist in a government job at 400 or 500 DME per month, when in private practice, in agriculture, or in industry he could easily command twice that salary. For this same reason, he complained, it is difficult to interest young people in careers as government servants.
20. Henschel (fnu) complained that personnel employed in government positions was not schooled thoroughly enough. He suggested that the Bezirk chairman pay more attention to getting to know his employees and their development so that he could guide them in future studies. He also stated that there was no ~~over~~ all plan by which the number of workers and peasants, women and young people was to be increased in government positions. He stated that in his Bezirk a plan had been drawn up whereby 300 workers from industry would be employed by governmental organs during the fourth quarters of 1953.
21. Hans Warnke, Bezirk Council Chairman in Rostock, suggested that the Bezirk Council chairman be notified in advance of the courses to be taught at the Verwaltungs Akademie "Walter Ulbricht" so that they can plan which employees to send there. He complained that the schooling for mayors in the past had been too short, maintaining that at least from three to six months were necessary to train a good mayor. He also complained that it was impossible to hold leading functionaries at the Kreis level with the present schedule of salaries. In Rostock or Weimar, for example, the deputy-mayor receives 650 DME monthly, whereas the director of the Chamber of **Industry** and Commerce receives 1,150 DME per month. Warnke requested that this problem be brought up in a meeting of the Stellenplankommission.
22. Regarding the problem of large farmers (Grossbauern), Grotewohl reminded the chairmen of the Bezirk Councils that all sentences pronounced against this group prior to 17 June 1953 were to be reviewed. He stated that he was not pleased with progress along these lines. He cited Bezirk Halle as an example, where 163 cases had been reviewed and in 103 cases a revision of the sentence imposed and a return of confiscated property refused. This is no way to convince the population that the New Course is a reality, he stated. Furthermore, the Soviet friends had criticized the East German government very sharply, saying that this was the wrong kind of politics, that they (the Soviets) were aiming at changes in Germany which would have international ramifications and the SED was pursuing a course which produced just the opposite effect.
23. Grotewohl remarked that many Bezirk chairmen were hesitant in returning the confiscated property of the large farmers because thereby they felt that they were engaged in a policy which could be construed

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

Page 5

as favoring the kulak class. Grotewohl stated that this was the wrong interpretation, that the few thousand kulaks would be no trouble to the government in the long run, but that the important thing at this point was the effect the return of their property would have on West Germany and on international public opinion.

24. Hans Warnke stated that in the coastal area there were 700 cases in which property had been confiscated or requisitioned and that this property could not be returned because the area in which it was located had been declared a restricted area (Sperrgebiet). Grotewohl replied that this was a special case, that special ordinances were in force there, but that in general the policy was one of leniency toward the large farmers at this time.

25X1

1/ Comment: Probably identical with Erich Funk, formerly of the Cadre Section of the SED Central Committee and now Chief, Main Department of Personnel, State Secretariat for Internal Affairs.

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